Montana Crop & Livestock Reporter

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HIGHLIGHTS:

Red Meat Production
Cattle on Feed
Milk Production
Wheat Ag Chemical Use
Egg Production
Potato Stocks
April Farm Labor

April 2005 Red Meat Production

Montana slaughter plants produced 1.0 million pounds, dressed weight, of red meat during April 2005, down 1 percent from April 2004 and down 9 percent from March 2005. Cattle slaughter totaled 1,200 head, 100 head below one year ago. The average live weight, at 1,174 pounds, decreased 7 pounds from last year.

During April there were 900 hogs slaughtered, up 100 head from a year ago. The average live weight, at 247 pounds, was down 3 pounds from last year. April sheep slaughter in the State totaled 200 head, up from 100 head in April 2004. The average live weight decreased 2 pounds to 120 pounds.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.62 billion pounds in April, down 2 percent from the 3.71 billion pounds produced in April 2004. Beef production, at 1.89 billion pounds, was 3 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.56 million head, down 5 percent from April 2004. The average live weight was up 20 pounds from the previous year, at 1,220 pounds. Veal production totaled 13.0 million pounds, 7 percent below April a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 61,600 head, down 13 percent from April 2004. The average live weight was 23 pounds above last year, at 353 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.70 billion pounds, down 1 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.44 million head, 2 percent below April 2004. The average live weight was 3 pounds above the previous year, at 271 pounds. Lamb and mutton production, at 15.5 million pounds, was down 11 percent from April 2004. Sheep slaughter totaled 220,800 head, 14 percent below last year. The average live weight was 141 pounds, up 5 pounds from April a year ago.

January to April 2005 commercial red meat production was 14.6 billion pounds, down 1 percent from 2004. Accumulated beef production was down 2 percent from last year, veal was down 12 percent, pork was down slightly from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down 8 percent.

Livestock County Estimates Available

The January 1, 2005 livestock inventory county estimates for all cattle and calves, beef cows, milk cows, sheep and lambs, and December 1, 2004 county estimates for hogs and pigs, and district estimates for chickens are now completed. These estimates are available on our website at http://www.nass.usda.gov/mt/.

Montana Agricultural Statistics Service compiles the only annual county estimates for Montana. The county estimates are based on livestock surveys conducted at the end of 2004 and beginning of 2005. Questionnaires were sent to a sample of farmers and ranchers throughout Montana asking for information on the livestock inventories. About 6,900 questionnaires were tabulated and summarized. Thank you to all the farmers and ranchers who participated in the survey!

U.S. Cattle on Feed Up 3 Percent

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.6 million head on May 1, 2005. The inventory was 3 percent above May 1, 2004 and 1 percent above May 1, 2003.

Placements in feedlots during April totaled 1.66 million, 4 percent above 2004 but 11 percent below 2003. Net placements were 1.57 million. During April, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 340,000, 600-699 pounds were 225,000, 700-799 pounds were 500,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 595,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during April totaled 1.80 million, 5 percent below 2004 and 9 percent below 2003. This is the lowest fed cattle marketings for the month of April since the series began in 1996. Other disappearance totaled 90,000 during April, 7 percent below 2004 but 43 percent above 2003.

April Milk Production

Milk production in the 23 major States during April totaled 13.6 billion pounds, up 3.2 percent from April 2004. March revised production, at 13.8 billion pounds, was up 2.9 percent from March 2004. The March revision represented a decrease of 0.1 percent or 20 million pounds from last month's preliminary production estimate.

Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,679 pounds for April, 43 pounds above April 2004. The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.11 million head, 44,000 head more than April 2004, and 12,000 head more than March 2005.

Wheat 2004 Agricultural Chemical Use

Durum wheat producers in Montana applied a total of 32.5 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer to 96 percent of the 570,000 acres planted for the 2004 crop. Eighty-four percent of the planted acreage received a total of 11.8 million pounds of phosphate fertilizer, while 0.6 million pounds of potash were used on 10 percent of the acres. Durum wheat producers applied 508 million pounds of herbicides to 99 percent of the 2004 durum wheat planted acres. The top three herbicides applied were dicamba with 56 percent, followed by glyphosate with 46 percent, and MCPA with 30 percent of the acreage sprayed.

Montana other spring wheat producers applied nitrogen fertilizer to 79 percent of the acreage planted for the 2004 crop. A total of 134.6 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer were applied to the 3.0 million acres of other spring wheat planted in Montana during 2004. Of the planted acreage, 69 percent received phosphate fertilizer, while potash was used on 13 percent of the acres. Total phosphate application was 72.6 million pounds and potash totaled 9.0 million pounds. Other spring wheat producers applied 1,652 million pounds of herbicides to 95 percent of the 2004 other spring wheat acres planted. The most common herbicides applied were glyphosate with 40 percent of the acreage sprayed, followed by 2,4-D with 33 percent, and dicamba with 28 percent. (continued on next page)

Wheat 2004 Ag Chemical Use

(continued from front page)

Winter wheat producers in the State applied 83.0 million pounds of nitrogen fertilizer to 92 percent of the 1.9 million acres planted for the 2004 crop. Of the planted acreage, 83 percent received 47.3 million pounds of phosphate fertilizer, while 3.9 million pounds of potash was applied to 21 percent of the acres. Winter wheat producers used 2,533 million pounds of herbicides on 95 percent of the winter wheat acres planted. The top three herbicides applied were glyphosate with 75 percent of the acreage sprayed, 2,4-D with 67 percent, and metsulphuron-methyl with 22 percent.

Nationally, two Program States, Montana and North Dakota, were surveyed for durum wheat in the 2004 ARMS phase II survey. Nitrogen was the most commonly used fertilizer for producers of durum wheat. At the Program State level, 36 pounds of nitrogen were applied per acre per application; 147.8 million total pounds of nitrogen were applied to the fields in 2004. The rate per application in the Program States was 24 pounds of phosphate per acre, with a total of 46.9 million pounds applied. Potash had the lowest coverage and smallest rate per application of all fertilizers reported. The rate per application of potash for the Program States was 9 pounds per acre, with 1.7 million total pounds applied to the fields.

None of the durum wheat growers reported any insecticides in this survey. Herbicides were applied to 99 percent of the durum wheat planted. Fenoxaprop was the most widely applied herbicide with 48 percent of the planted acreage being treated. It was applied at a rate of 0.05 pounds per acre per application; 67,000 total pounds were applied in the Program States. The next three most widely applied herbicides to durum wheat were glyphosate, MCPA, and 2,4-D. They were applied to 46, 45, and 36 percent, respectively, of the planted acreage. There were not enough reports available to publish any fungicide data.

States surveyed for other spring wheat included Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington. Nitrogen fertilizer was applied to 93 percent of the 2004 spring wheat planted acreage in the Program States. Spring wheat growers in the Program States applied nitrogen on average 2.0 times per acre, putting down 48 pounds of nitrogen per acre per treatment. Fertilizers with phosphate were applied to 79 percent of the planted acreage and 25 percent of the planted acreage received potash applications.

Spring wheat producers in the States surveyed treated 96 percent of their planted acreage with herbicides. MCPA was the most widely applied herbicide with 46 percent of the planted acreage being treated in the Program States. It was applied at a rate of 0.29 pounds per acre per application; a total of 1.845 million pounds of the active ingredient were applied in the Program States. The next four active ingredients that round off the top five used active ingredients were also herbicides. They were fenoxaprop, glyphosate, 2,4-D, and bromoxynil octanoate. The percentages of acres treated were 31, 23, 20, and 19 percent, respectively.

Insecticides were applied to only 2 percent of the other spring wheat acres planted in the Program States. No active ingredient was applied on more than 1 percent of the acres planted. Fungicides were applied to 20 percent of acres planted in the Program States. The most commonly used fungicide was tebuconazole, which was only applied to 12 percent of the acres planted in the Program States.

Winter wheat producers in the Program States (Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington) applied nitrogen fertilizer to 84 percent of the winter wheat planted acreage. The average number of nitrogen applications per acre was 2.0 with an average application rate of 44 pounds per acre; 2,733 million total pounds were applied. Phosphate was applied on 55 percent of the winter wheat planted acreage in the Program States; 934 million total pounds were applied. Potash was applied to 16 percent of the planted winter wheat acreage in the Program States.

In the Program States, 45 percent of the winter wheat planted acreage was treated with herbicides. The most widely used herbicides were metsulfuron-methyl, applied to 15 percent of the winter wheat acreage, followed by glyphosate and 2,4-D, both applied to 13 percent of the planted acreage in the States surveyed.

Insecticide applications were made to 7 percent of the winter wheat planted acres in 2004. Chlorpyrifos, the most widely used insecticide, was only applied to 3 percent of Program State acres planted. Fungicides were applied to 2 percent of Program State acreage. No active ingredients were applied to more than 1 percent of the total Program State acreage.

May Potato Stocks

Montana potato producers held 400,000 cwt of potatoes in storage on May 1, 2005, down 60 percent from the previous year. Eleven percent of the 2005 Montana potato crop is still in storage, compared with 30 percent last year at this time.

The 15 major potato States held 87.0 million cwt of potatoes in storage May 1, 2005, up 2 percent from last year and 5 percent above May 1, 2003. Potatoes in storage account for 22 percent of the 2004 fall storage States' production, 1 percentage point above last year.

Disappearance of 316 million cwt from the start of harvest to May 1, is down 1 percent from last year and 2 percent below two years ago. Shrink and loss, at 29.0 million cwt, is up 5 percent from last year and 12 percent above the same date in 2003.

Processors have used 154 million cwt of 2004 crop potatoes so far this season, down 1 percent from a year ago and 4 percent below two years ago. April usage, at 17.8 million cwt, is 7 percent above last year and up 8 percent from two years ago. Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon, total processing increased 3 percent from a year ago, while Washington and the rest of Oregon total processing decreased less than 1 percent from last season. Dehydrating usage accounts for 31.4 million cwt of the total processing, down 9 percent from last year and 13 percent below the same date in 2003.

Western States held 62.9 million cwt of potatoes in storage on May 1, up 6 percent from last year but less than 1 percent below two years ago. Idaho's potato stocks are up 17 percent from last year, Colorado's potato sheds stored 7 percent more, and Washington's stocks increased 3 percent from last year. Montana's potato stocks are down 60 percent, Oregon's sheds hold 38 percent less than last year, and California's stocks decreased 29 percent from a year ago.

Central States accounted for 18.6 million cwt of potato stocks on May 1, down 12 percent from last year but 19 percent above two years ago. Michigan's potato stocks are down 27 percent, North Dakota's potato sheds stored 13 percent less than last year, and Minnesota's and Wisconsin's stocks both decreased 7 percent. Nebraska and Ohio's potato stocks combined decreased 24 percent from last year.

Eastern States stored 5.49 million cwt of potatoes on May 1, up 28 percent from last year and 29 percent above two years ago. Maine's potato sheds hold 24 percent more than last year. Pennsylvania and New York's stocks combined increased 95 percent from a year ago.

Hired Workers Down 10 Percent, Wage Rates Up 1 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 978,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 10-16, 2005, down 10 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 746,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 232,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of $9.34 per hour during the April 2005 reference week, up 11 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of $8.55 per hour, up 8 cents from last April, while livestock workers earned $9.23 per hour compared with $8.95 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at $8.73 per hour, was up 14 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 39.8 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down 2 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in California, Florida, and in the Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), and Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota) regions. In California, a weak El Nino weather pattern brought unseasonably cool temperatures and record rainfall to the southern half of the State from January through March, affecting quality and interrupting planting, harvesting, and crop development. The wet weather had the largest impact on vegetable crops and nursery and floriculture production, which kept the demand for hired workers well behind the previous year. Field work in Florida was hampered by wet soils in northern areas, and estimated citrus production was down considerably from 2004. These factors combined to reduce the need for hired workers. In the Mountain II region, heavy snowfall and rains in Colorado slowed field activities, so fewer workers were required. The cool, wet spring and below normal soil temperatures in the Northeast II region delayed planting of field and vegetable crops and slowed the development of hay and pastures. Thus, the demand for hired workers was lower. In the Northern Plains region, wet conditions limited field activities and lessened the need for hired workers.

The largest increases in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), and Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions. Ideal weather conditions in the Southern Plains region allowed land preparation and planting to progress rapidly, increasing the need for field workers. In the Delta region, Louisiana's warm, dry weather more than offset the wet conditions experienced in Arkansas and Mississippi, which led to greater demand for hired workers. In the Mountain III region, continued expansion in the dairy, vegetable, nursery, and greenhouse industries necessitated more hired workers. Strong demand from vegetable, tobacco, and Christmas tree operations in the Appalachian I region kept worker numbers above last year.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Southern Plains, Mountain III, Northern Plains, and Florida regions. The higher wages in the Southern Plains were due to a larger concentration of full time workers. In the Mountain III and Florida regions, wages were up due to a higher percentage of skilled vegetable, nursery, and greenhouse workers. Wages in the Northern Plains region were higher because of more salaried workers putting in fewer hours, which pushed their hourly wage higher.

Wage Rates for Hired Workers, by Region & U.S., April 11-17, 2004 & April 10-16, 2005 1/

U.S. and Region 2/	TYPE OF WORKER						Wage Rates for All Hired Workers	
	Field		Livestock		Field & Livestock			
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
	Dollars per Hour							
Northeast I	9.47	9.01	8.81	8.51	9.18	8.83	10.35	9.47
Northeast II	8.68	9.24	8.87	8.62	8.73	9.05	9.25	9.65
Appalachian I	8.01	8.38	8.38	8.85	8.14	8.50	8.82	9.07
Appalachian II	8.48	8.38	8.62	7.69	8.55	8.08	9.06	8.59
Southeast	7.88	8.41	8.71	8.30	8.12	8.38	8.42	8.83
FL	7.85	8.20	8.60	9.90	7.94	8.37	8.79	9.31
Lake	9.20	8.99	9.95	10.05	9.60	9.45	10.10	9.95
Cornbelt I	9.04	8.84	8.87	9.17	9.00	8.91	9.74	9.51
Cornbelt II	9.04	8.85	9.03	9.27	9.04	9.06	9.48	9.38
Delta	7.75	7.37	7.47	7.18	7.70	7.34	7.86	7.64
Northern Plains	8.87	9.33	8.51	9.69	8.73	9.46	8.95	9.70
Southern Plains	7.50	8.13	7.93	9.15	7.62	8.53	8.13	9.28
Mountain I	8.14	7.89	8.41	8.49	8.31	8.23	8.57	8.43
Mountain II	9.66	7.70	8.83	8.41	9.29	8.02	9.84	8.50
Mountain III	7.55	7.95	8.20	9.40	7.81	8.51	8.37	9.18
Pacific	9.02	8.87	10.16	10.78	9.16	9.23	9.91	9.95
CA	8.42	8.59	9.83	10.34	8.56	8.82	9.30	9.48
HI 3/	9.51	9.67			9.66	9.79	11.26	11.33
US 4/	8.47	8.55	8.95	9.23	8.59	8.73	9.23	9.34

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers. 2/ Regions consist of the following Northeast I: CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT. Northeast II: DE, MD, NJ, PA. Appalachian I: NC, VA. Appalachian II: KY, TN, WV. Southeast: AL, GA, SC. Lake MI, MN, WI. Cornbelt I: IL, IN, OH. Cornbelt II: IA, MO. Delta: AR, LA, MS. Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD. Southern Plains: OK, TX. Mountain I: ID, MT, WY. Mountain II: CO, NV, UT. Mountain III: AZ, NM. Pacific: OR, WA. 3/ Insufficient data for livestock. 4/ Excludes AK.

April Egg Production Up Slightly

U.S. egg production totaled 7.39 billion during April 2005, up slightly from last year. Production included 6.29 billion table eggs, and 1.10 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.04 billion were broiler-type and 63 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during April 2005 averaged 344 million, up slightly from a year earlier. April egg production per 100 layers was 2,148 eggs, unchanged from April 2004.

All layers in the U.S. on May 1, 2005, totaled 343 million, up slightly from a year ago. The 343 million layers consisted of 283 million layers producing table or market type eggs, 57.4 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.68 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on May 1, 2005, averaged 71.4 eggs per 100 layers, up 1 percent from a year ago.

Egg-Type Chicks Hatched Up 2 Percent

Egg-type chicks hatched during April 2005 totaled 38.3 million, up 2 percent from April 2004. Eggs in incubators totaled 35.9 million on May 1, 2005, up 8 percent from a year ago.

Domestic placements of egg-type pullet chicks for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 308,000 during April 2005, down 10 percent from April 2004.

Broiler Hatch Up 2 Percent

Broiler-type chicks hatched during April 2005 totaled 790 million, up 2 percent from April 2004. Eggs in incubators totaled 663 million on May 1, 2005, up slightly from a year earlier. Leading breeders placed 6.80 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during April 2005, up 6 percent from April 2004.

COMING IN NEXT REPORTER

Barley County Estimates
Ag Prices Received
Winter Wheat Production
Wheat Supply & Demand -
Economic Research Service

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